

A STUDY OF THE VERSIONS OF 'FAIR ANNIE'

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The ballad studies in Japan have largely been ignored in past studies. While the ballad is and always has been one of the most extraordinary and fascinating subjects for western scholars, it has been left discarded here as a useless adjunct. This is probably because the scholars' interest in Japan centers on masterpieces of literary magnates rather than on traditional literature; or probably because gratuitous negligence of folk tradition on the part of scholars in Japan has permeated the whole of their research works. Because of their misconception as to the role played by the oral transmission of such a highly formal genre as the popular ballad, they never know that it is a more fascinating task to probe into the understructure of the works of Coleridge or Burns which finally finds its way to the mighty stream of folklore.

This paper, however, is not to present a full-scale study on the ballad; but to bring forward some questions on the versions of *Fair Annie* that have been left untouched so far.

1

In order to gain some clue to the comparative study of the versions of *Fair Annie*, I have tried to tabulate the presence and the absence of the motifs seen in each available version. The motifs introduced in the present paper have been taken up in such a way that they can amply cover the synopsis of the standard story of *Fair Annie*. The standard story as is given by T. P. Coffin in his 'The British Traditional Ballad in North America' goes as follows.

Annie was stolen in her childhood by a knight from over the sea, to whom she has born seven sons out of wedlock. Her consort bids her prepare to welcome a bride, with whom he shall get gold and gear; with her he got none. She must look like a maid, comb down her yellow locks, and braid her hair. Annie meekly assents, as she loved the knight. Suppressing her tears, Annie serves at the wedding and makes the bride comfortable. When the married couple go to bed, Annie in a room by herself bewails her lot in a sad song to her harp or her virginals. The bride hears the song and goes to Annie's parentage and learns they are sisters. The bride, who had come with many well-loaded ships, gives most of her wealth to Annie and goes home a virgin.

In the following table I have given four American versions as well as the versions

from Child and also the three of Child's which are of only several stanzas and fragmentary with no finals (D, G, H) have been excluded. The alphabets given to each version are as follows.

- A, B, C, E, F, I, J consistent with Child's versions
 K Barry: British Ballads from Maine, 1929
 L J. H. Combs: Folk-Songs du Midi des Etats-Unis, 1925
 M A. K. Davis: Folk Songs of Virginia, 1949
 N C. J. Sharp and M. Karpeles: English Folk Song from the Southern Appalachians, 1932

The motifs alphabetized

- a Annie was stolen from home by a knight or by some other persons.
 b She was born seven sons.
 c 'Who will bake my bridal bread, or brew my bridal ale?'
 (This is given as symbolical words of exact obedience from Annie by her consort and difference of phraseology is adopted in this table when it conveys the symbolical meaning.)
 d With the bride he will get gowd and gear.
 e She must look like a maid.
 f Annie serves at the wedding.
 g She wishes her seven sons were seven grey (or young, etc.) rats or hares, etc. and her a cat or grey hound, etc.
 (This is given as the distinctive remarks showing her wailing.)
 h A song or a flute, etc. leads to the disclosure of Annie's identity.
 i The bride inquires of Annie's Parentage.

Version Motif	A	B	C	E	F	I	J	K	L	M	N
a	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	X	X
b	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
c	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	X
d	O	X	O	X	X	O	O	X	O	X	X
e	O	X	X	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	X
f	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	X
g	O	O	O	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	X
h	O	X	O	O	O	O	O	X	O	X	X
i	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

The presence and the absence of the motifs in this table are shown by O and X.

From the table shown above we can draw some inferences, which can rouse helpful discussions concerning this ballad.

The most persistent motifs which are found in all the versions are *i* and *b*. The

persistence of *i* should be understandable, because it is closely connected with the most important motif; Annie and the bride are found to be sisters. But how could this *b* be so persistent?

Attention may secondly be called to Motif *c* which is found in all the versions excepting two American variants. We are struck with the strangeness of her consort's request. This must be more than baking bread or symbolism of women's self-sacrifice or resignation.

These questions raised above are no worthless appendices. They are intensely interesting, and as exciting as they are interesting. Only that the bulk of the present paper would be greatly expanded. Moreover, in inquiring into the kernel of the subjects, we are supposed to penetrate into the exact meaning of a text and interpolate our own ideas between the lines. We have to levy on sociology and psychology and anthropology to support our investigation.

Accordingly, in this paper, our attention will be focused upon the four American versions which have been presented after Child's Collection.

In examining the table above, the greatest interest centres around two items. First, the three American versions K, M, and N show inevitable tendency of losing a number of motifs which survive in Child's versions. Secondly, Version L exceptionally retains all the motifs shown above.

2

M and N show quite different characteristics from the Child's versions, while K still retains the textual affinities to some of Child's versions. (cf. Barry: *British Ballads from Main*, p. 446)

The close relationship between M and N is already mentioned by A. K. Davis in his 'Folksongs of Virginia.' I would like to refer to his opinion, making some additions to it.

One of them is the presence of the name of Lord Thomas which occurs only in A among the Child's versions and the two American versions. (Davis does not mention the occurrence of the name in N, though he mentions the occurrence of it in A and M.)

You're welcome to your house, Lord Thomas,

You are welcome to your land; (A)

"You are welcome, Lord Thomas," she said,

"You are welcomed home by me;

You and your men, your merry men

Are all as welcome as one." (M)

If you'll have Lord Thomas hung ;
 Six of them I'll give to you,
 And one will carry me home. (M)

She thought she saw Lord Thomas a-coming,
 All bringing his new briden home. (N)

And five of them I'll give to you
 And two will carry me home,
And we'll have Lord Thomas burned. (N)

Special attention should be drawn to the underlined parts which suggest the punishment for Lord Thomas. This idea are not found in any Child text.

"And especially interesting verbal similarity of the American texts, again not found in the Child versions,* is," Davis puts, "is the expression, 'She looked all under the sun.," "

She looked east, she looked west,
 She looked all under the sun (M)

She looked to the East, West, both North and South,
 And looked all under the sun. (N)

* Notwithstanding the remarks of Davis we can find the approximation of this expression in the Child's version 'I'.

She lookit east, she looki twest,
 And south, below the sun, (15)

In this connection C. A. Smith's words are as follows:

"Better examples occur in two versions of Fair Annie, number 62 in Child's Collection, one of which has recently been found in North Carolina version, taken down by the English balladist, C. Sharp, from the singing of Mrs. Jane Gentry, of Mansion county, has its second stanza.

"The Virginia version was sent to me only a few days ago by Mr. John Stone, of Albermarle county. (omitted)

"They prove also that, though the expression may have left the shores of Great Britain, though it may be disdained by the pen of the scholar, it lives on the tongue of the plain people in our own Appalachian mountains." (He mentions that the expression is not found in the English writings since Chaucer.)

The common features which are shared between M and N in the table shown above are the absence of the motifs *a*, *c*, *d* and *h*. This seems very peculiar because no other versions show this kind of characteristics. Above all, the absence of the motif 'c', which occurs persistently in all the other versions, is quite impressive.

3

The strange parallelism of the motifs between Version 'L' and Child's versions, especially the classical version 'A', is striking, when all the other American versions show the tendency of transfiguration. This version is especially characterized by its introductory stanzas; the indians stole Annie but Lord Harry paid a ransom for her and took her to his mansion-house.

The introductory explanation like this never occurs in any other versions which I have presented so far, and also no one has ever mentioned, so far as I know, the version which is furnished with this introductory stanzas. While I was trying to range over the extensive versions of *Fair Annie* I came across the very old book of William Allingham, "The Ballad Book." The introductory stanzas of the version is as follows:

The reivers they stole Fair Annie,

As she walked by the sea;

But a noble knight was her ransom soon,

Wi' goud and white monie.

For your information let us introduce Combs' version.

The Indians stole fair Annie

As she walked by the sea,

But Lord Harry for her a ransom paid,

In gold and silver money.

The similarity between them with their exact likeness of the underlined parts is extraordinary when no other versions have these introductory stanzas. Impressed much, I have tried to compare the detailed items and the results of it are shown below.

Do up, do up, your yellow hair,

And knot it on your neck,

And see you look as maiden-like

As when I met you first.

(Combs)

Bind up, bind up your yellow hair,

And tie it on your neck;

As the day that first we met.

(Allingham)

This motif occurs just in one version (F).

Bind up, bind up your yellow hair,

And tye it in your neck,

And see you look as maiden-like

As the first day that we met.

Four months were past and gone,
And the word to fair Annie came
That the boat was back from the river,
With the sweet bonny bride at home. (Combs)
Three months and a day were gane and past,
Fair Annie gat word,
That her love's ship was come at last,
Wi' his bright young Bride abroad. (Allingham)

The expression that Fair Annie got the word never occurs in any other versions.

She took her young son on her arm,
A second by the hand,
And with the keys about the waist
Out to the gate has gone. (Combs)
She's ta'en a cake o' the best bread,
A stoup o' the best wine;
And a' the keys upon her arm,
And to the yett is gane.

The idea that she went to the gate to meet her lover occurs sometimes, but never with the key excepting the version B.

She's taen a cake o the best bread,
A bottle o the best wine,
And a' the keys upon her arm,
And to the yates she's gane. (B)

"I'll slip on my dress," said the new-come bride,
"And draw my shoes over my feet;
I will see who so sadly sings,
And what it is that makes her grief." (Combs)

"I'll put on my gown," said the new-come Bride
"And my shoes upon my feet;
I will see wha doth sae sadly sing.
And what is it gars her greet." (Allingham)

This motif never occurs in any other versions.

O what is it ails my housekeeper,
 That you make such a to-do? (Combs)
 What ails you, what ails you, my housekeeper,
 That ye mak' sic a mane? (Allingham)
 No other versions have such an address.

It isn't because my keys are lost,
 Or because my feast is gone;
But I have lost my true-love,
And he had wedded another one. (Combs)

It is na because my wine is split,
 Or that my white bread's gane;
But because I've lost my true love's love,
And he's wed to anither ane. (Allingham)

Never occurs such a confession in any other versions.

Take your husband, my sister dear;
 You are never wronged by me,
 More than a kiss from his dear mouth,
 As we came up the bay. (Combs)

Tak' your husband, my sister dear;
 You ne'er were wrang'd for me,
 Beyond a kiss o' his merry mouth
 As we came o'er the sea. (Allingham)

Also these remarkably parallel stanzas never occur in any other versions.

Taking into consideration the striking parallelism which seldom occur in any other versions, we cannot help deduce that these two versions found in England and America are very much closely related leaving no room for discussion.

From what I have traced so far we can possibly draw the following inferences.

- 1 There used to be at least three types of *Fair Annie* widely circulated. (For convenience' sake we call them Type A, Type B and Type C.)
- 2 Type A is represented by the versions in Child's Collection.
- 3 Type B is represented by Version M and N and is characterized by the presence of the name of Lord Thomas. It shows some affinity to Child's Version A.
- 4 Type C is represented by Allingham version which is distinguished by the

introductory stanza.

5 Version K is a tributary to Type A and Version L to Type B.

6 The three types went their respective ways and landed in America.

Of course Type A, B and C as subtypes are to be merged into the one archetype. There are very few clue to show which subtype is older and retains the traits of the archetype. Although Type A is a very widely diffused ballad, the extent of diffusion of a ballad is no safe guide to its age. One type may be very popular and may spread very quickly, while another may not prove so attractive and may spread slowly, or may remain confined to a small area for a long time. Accordingly, for all the temptation to see evidence about the age of the ballad in the migration of peoples, we are not informed of it under the present data.

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